

Dumont Dunes TRT
MINUTES OF MEETING
June 5, 2007

Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Field Office
Conference Room
2601 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311
(760) 252-6000

1. Call to Order

TRT Chairman Bill Presch called the meeting to order at 10:05 am and led the TRT in a recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

A. Introductions

Members of the TRT and participating BLM staff introduced themselves:

TRT Members Present:

Dr. William Presch, chairman; California Desert District Advisory Council
Jim Bramham, vice chairman; OHV organizations
Randy Banis, secretary; other motorized recreation
Terry Allen, Nevada OHV interests (via speakerphone)
David Charlton, California Desert District Advisory Council
Gerry Hillier, San Bernardino County
Ed Waldheim, California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission
John Dalglish, Friends of Dumont Dunes (via speakerphone)

BLM Staff Present:

Roxie Trost, Manager, Barstow Field Office
Lynnette Elser, Recreation Chief, Barstow Field Office
Dan Briot, Chief Ranger, Barstow Field Office

Members of the General Public Present:

Jim Colln, CORVA, Friends of Dumont Dunes
Ted Smith
Mike Woods, OHV Representative, Marine Corps Logistics Base, Barstow

TRT Members Absent:

Sheri Davis, commercial filming, California Desert District Advisory Council
Ron Schiller, California Desert District Advisory Council
Kathleen Stosuy, California OHV interests

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B. Agenda

Bill Presch opened the agenda to additions or changes. Roxie Trost explained that there were only two inside telephone lines but three members wished to join via teleconference. This meant that Kathy Stosuy wouldn't be able to participate. A call in number can be arranged but it requires advance notice. The agenda was approved by consent.

C. Minutes

Copies of the draft minutes of the TRT's April 17, 2007, meeting were circulated earlier via email. The minutes were approved by consent.

2. Old Business

A. Update on Dumont Dunes Road Surfacing Project

Lynnette Elser reported that the crushed asphalt still needed to be evenly spread, rolled and sealed. She estimated the cost for the road work to be \$100,000, compared to \$26,000 just to apply dust control.

Ed Waldheim inquired way this additional cost was not discussed earlier. Terry Allen stated it was his understanding that BLM would be performing the road work. Lynnette responded that the funds to pay for this work are not coming from recreation fee moneys and that there was another account to fund the work. Lynnette also reported that there was a small stock pile of crushed asphalt that has yet to be applied.

Ed was concerned about how much work was left to do. Terry added that he feared the quality of the crushed asphalt may have been comprised by mixed in sand since it was spread months ago. Visitor Mike Woods reported that a user-made route has been created along side the crust asphalt due to the ruts and washboard road, and added that he did not notice the surplus asphalt during the prior weekend. Jim Bramham stated his belief that there was still a good chance that the rolling, compacting and sealing of the road will result in a good, long lasting surface.

Terry asked about the status of the crossing work. Lynnette reported that it was still on the schedule but that crews were still waiting for the river to dry further before commencing.

B. Trash Issue

Terry Allen reported on his meeting with Cynthia Kienitz of the Old Spanish Trail Association in Tecopa regarding the issues of: 1) trash generated by OHV users; 2) the dumping of black water tanks along the local highways; 3) traffic and noise created by pass-thru travel to the dunes; and 4) the incursion of OHV's on Mud Flat and in Sperry Wash.

Terry felt that the two an understanding that the trash problems of the local communities is being driven by Inyo County's proposal to cease trash services; and that dunes visitors only contribute to the problem rather than being the cause of the problem.

He described discussions regarding the lack of law enforcement during the major holiday weekends, and the need for more economic development in the communities in hopes of gaining financially from what is now pass-thru traffic.

Together they examined Sperry Wash, and also met with Brian Brown of China Ranch. Although Cynthia emailed him requesting a second meeting, Terry explained that he'd like to see broader participation at the next get together.

Roxie Trost reported on a meeting the previous day called by Inyo County regarding the trash disposal issue. They met with the local community about finding an alternative dump station on public lands and are in the earliest stages of identifying an appropriate location and finding potential grant money for the communities to lease the land from the BLM.

Randy Banis summarized from notes an email that he received that morning from Sophia Merk of National Public Lands News urging the BLM to provide trash and waste disposal services for dunes visitors. Ms. Merk requested that her comments be entered into the record . (See attached.) Randy said that he would forward the email to the rest of the TRT after the meeting.

Gerry Hillier suggested that misconception may be driving the local concerns and that this might be a long term issue involving continuous education and communication. He suggested our viewing the communities as a possible partner rather than critics.

Bill Presch added that he would invite the interested parties in the matter to the next TRT meeting. Gerry suggested the possibility of our taking a future TRT meeting to them, perhaps at China Ranch.

Ed Waldheim asked Dan Briot what he has observed regarding trash and waste dumping. Dan replied that the limited resources have kept law enforcement in the dunes so they are not aware of the problems along the highway. Ed asked is vendors have been solicited for trash collection and RV waste disposal. Lynnette responded that no local vendor has agreed to perform the service. However, one local vendor has offered to pick up trash along the highway for \$400 per month and \$0.35 per mile.

Ed cited the lack of progress on the trash management issue and urged that the problem be solved right way by providing dumpsters for users. Jim Bramham responded with a suggested to arrange trash clean up service along the highway rather than providing trash service for all visitors.

Bill said that providing trash service can yield additional problems such as protecting against scavenging by animals, raven control, and overflow when full. He also urged a trash pick up effort for the highway.

Roxie responded favorably regarding the vendor offer for road side trash collection and felt that there was the potential for additional partnerships in the future. Bill asked for a motion requesting that the BLM engage the vendor. Ed seconded.

Guests Jim Colln and Mike Woods felt that greater efforts toward educating users should be tried first. Roxie and other TRT members described for the guests the various flyers used last season, however the guest responded that they had not seen these materials during their visits.

Randy Banis said that the TRT first discussed the issue at its first meeting in March 2006. Being newly created we extended support for efforts on the trash problem that would allow the status quo to be maintained at the dunes. While some efforts have been made, the problems have become only larger. Randy said it was time to do more and urged support for the motion.

Mike Woods asked if the group know how much trash is being left road side. Terry Allen described that what he sees is not an overflowing problem, but rather occasional, and estimated less than one day's work to pick up. He believed that the majority of the trash along the road side was carelessly blown out from the back of pickup trucks and 5th wheels.

Jim Bramham called the question. The motion was approved with none opposed. Bill closed the discussion with optimism, hoping others would see that we are trying something new.

Jim asked how the group might address the problem of black water dumping. Terry requested that Roxie inquire of the Tecopa Fire Chief the specific locations of the five dumpsites he recently cited to the press.

C. Funding For Dumont Dunes

Bill reminded the TRT that at the last meeting it voted to support a new fee structure that would result in a short fall in income compared to projected expenses. This was done with the understanding that the BLM would review the budget and identify possible spending adjustments.

Lynnette felt that the short fall was minor enough to handle through savings from unfilled positions and the firming up of estimates as contracts are finalized. This will be reviewed and kept in balance via periodic adjustments. Lynnette circulated a new spreadsheet that included partial historic sales data.

Bill Presch asked if there was more information on the new fee collection methods that were raised at the prior meeting. Lynnette responded that the current favored method is off site sales with an on site vendor booth during major weekends.

Bill suggested that a pass vendor be located about a quarter mile off the highway. Jim suggested combining an RV dump service with an exclusive right to sell the on site passes. He further discussed the difficulties of enforcing compliance without staff at the entrance. Randy questioned how much of a real dollar incentive this will turn out to be for pass vendors. Others answered that those who visit a vendor for a pass will usually also purchase fuel and sundry items.

Roxie reported that the current vendor is going through a required audit and that final data would soon be available. Randy returned the discussions to enforcing the passes, but there was no consensus on how to do this. Roxie said it was one of her priority goals to finalize the new process for fee collection.

Dan Briot suggested a mobile pass machine that could be set up and removed by rangers. The group also discussed the pros and cons of online sales. Guest Jim Colln suggested that Friends of Dumont Dunes could sell permits. Currently telephone sales are available, but Terry Allen suggested that only annual passes be sold this way. Roxie said she would assemble and summarize some ideas on the new fee process and email them to us for comments.

Bill recessed the meeting for lunch at 12:05 pm. The meeting was call back to order at 12:20 pm.

D. New Location for Vendor Row

Terry Allen suggested new locations for vendor row, including either to the south of the proposed helipad area, or to north of the proposed helipad where the ground is firm. He also suggested near the rock pile. Dan Briot agreed that either of the first two suggested locations would be better than the current location and added that the area to the south of the proposed helipad might be easier to define.

John Dalglish cautioned that firm ground will be important especially if passes will be sold there. Terry thought that these locations were more firm than the current vendor row area.

Jim Bramham made a motion to ask the BLM to contact the vendors for their opinion on the proposed sites. Terry seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor, and with Gerry Hillier abstaining citing his missing the discussion.

E. Supplemental Rule for a Slow Zone

Bill Presch recounted the TRT's previous discussion about the speed of vehicles near the camping areas and a suggestion to limit speeds a certain distance from camp. Dan Briot

suggested considering a rule that says one has to be “in the dunes” rather than a certain distance from a campsite. This would have to be well defined and issued via a supplemental rule. He went on to state that unlike a “no wake zone” this would be difficult to enforce.

Jim described the use of radar-based speed signs at Glamis so that users can better know their actual speed, noting that most OHV’s have no speedometer.

Roxie explained that there now exists at the district level a supplemental rules committee comprised of representatives from all of the field offices. The purpose of the committee is to address rulemaking at the district level for better consistency across the various field offices. Such a rule might have to be promulgated district wide through this committee.

Randy Banis suggested that Friends of Dumont Dunes prepare a map indicating which areas might be subject to speed restrictions. Ed Waldheim cautioned that there was an existing state law limited vehicle speeds to 15 MPH within 50 feet of a campsite and urged that this still apply even outside the designated lower speed zone.

Dan Briot reminded the TRT that there are already rules in place regarding speed in unsafe conditions, and when it is not reasonable and prudent. It might not be necessary to add rules, but rather address as an enforcement issue. He further urged more signing to better educate users to the existing laws and rules. This comment was supported by Guest Jim Colln who supports greater education of users in general.

Roxie and Dan both agreed that implementing this rule would be an uphill fight. Jim Bramham issued hope there might be interest from other field offices to developing a camp speed rule.

3. Members Items

A. Guest Jim Colln

Jim sought input from the BLM and TRT on a plan to implement a series of educational message signs along the Dumont Dunes road. He suggested that the signs would be administered by Friends of Dumont Dunes with messages approved by the BLM. Roxie and Lynnette offered to meet with him on the suggestion.

B. Gerry Hillier

Gerry reported on the new wilderness bill by Senator Boxer that includes a wild and scenic river designation for the Amargosa River. However, like last year’s McKeon & Boxer bill, this new bill also does not have an exemption for the Dumont Dunes Road crossing as it does for the two crossings in Inyo County.

C. Lynnette Elser

Lynnette reported that the Great Basin Air Quality District is currently trying to correlate recreational use at the dunes with dust production in the area. This effort was undertaken at the request of a group of residents of Tecopa.

Lynnette also reported that the Barstow office is actively looking at alternatives to reduce off route travel by OHV's in Sperry Wash, including limiting travel to street legal vehicles over the first mile of the route.

4. Next Meeting

By consent, the TRT set the following date, time and location for its next public meeting:
Tuesday, August 21, 2007, 10:00 AM
BLM Barstow Field Office Conference Room

5 Adjournment

By consent, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Randy Banis
Secretary, Dumont Dunes Technical Review Team

Approved on August 21, 2007

Bureau of Land Management, Dumont Dunes TRT
March 6, 2007 Minutes

From: "Sam Merk" <samiam@iwvisp.com>
To: "Randy Banis" <RBanis@deathvalley.com>
Date: Mon, 4 Jun 2007 17:59:13 -0700

Randy,

I am so sorry but I will not be able to attend the meeting in Barstow as projected, as I will be in Independence at the same time. Please let the following comments be entered into the meeting from me.

It is unfair that visitors are using Inyo as a dumping area but obtaining their services from Baker, Pahrump, Ridgecrest, etc.

Allow me to suggest some possible ways to alleviate the problem:

1. On three-day weekends (Holidays), provide covered dumpsters (2 rollovers) at Dumont Dunes and charge extra for those heavy use weekends by the users. It also needs to be picked up by the following Tuesday at the latest. Also have available a way to gather any overflow.
2. Have a tanker available for honey dippers and charge accordingly. BLM could actually enter into agreements for the honey-dippers and have them charge on a service per individual. This would alleviate some of the discharge problems in sensitive areas.
3. Have BLM or friends of Dumont Dunes pay one of the local residents to insure that only Inyo County residents are using the dumpsters in the towns of Tecopa and Shoshone or have a volunteer from their group be responsible that no transients use it.
4. Make sure that all transfer stations in Inyo County that are paid by Inyo County be identified as only being used by Inyo County Residents (most of them do to my knowledge).
5. Reach out to recycling vendors in that area and provide an incentive to recycle cans, etc. For their efforts, they would be allowed to keep any monies appropriated.

Although our headquarters (National Public Lands News) are in Ridgecrest, California (Kern County) this is a problem that needs to be addressed as a whole unit, than rather a fractionalized piece. If we can be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to call on us.

Sophia Merk (SAM),
Communications Director

National Public Lands News
(760) 375-3311 office
NPLNEWS.com
P.O. Box 527
Ridgecrest, CA 93556

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

Motion relative to engaging a vendor for trash pickup along highway

Roxie responded favorably regarding the vendor offer for road side trash collection and felt that there was the potential for additional partnerships in the future. Bill asked for a motion requesting that the BLM engage the vendor. Ed seconded. Jim Bramham called the question. The motion was approved with none opposed. Bill closed the discussion with optimism, hoping others would see that we are trying something new.

Ideas for new fee collection process

Dan Briot suggested a mobile pass machine that could be set up and removed by rangers. The group also discussed the pros and cons of online sales. Guest Jim Colln suggested that Friends of Dumont Dunes could sell permits. Currently telephone sales are available, but Terry Allen suggested that only annual passes be sold this way. Roxie said she would assemble and summarize some ideas on the new fee process and email them to us for comments.

Motion relative to moving vendor row

Jim Bramham made a motion to ask the BLM to contact the vendors for their opinion on the proposed sites. Terry seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor, and with Gerry Hillier abstaining citing his missing the discussion.

Next Meeting

By consent, the TRT set the following date, time and location for its next public meeting: Tuesday, August 21, 2007, 10:00 AM, BLM Barstow Field Office Conference Room.